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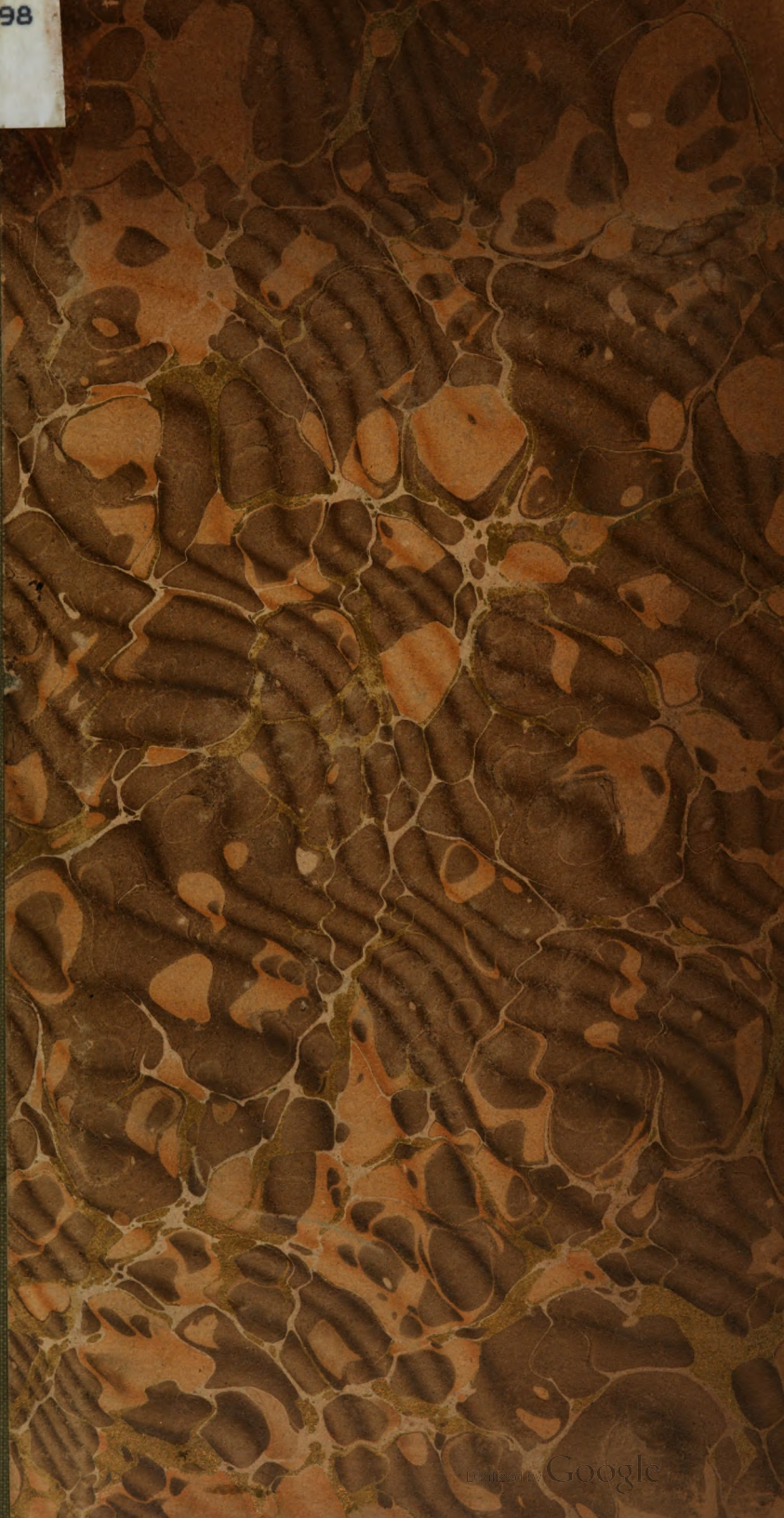
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St. George ❖

AND

❖ the Dragon.

A FARCICAL COMEDY IN TWO ACTS,

BY

LOUIS N. PARKER.



ST. GEORGE & THE DRAGON.



A FARCICAL COMEDY IN TWO ACTS.



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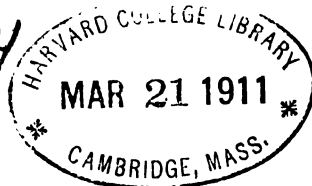


SHERBORNE:

J. C. SAWTELL, THE PARADE.

1890.

23 x 98. 11. 21



*F. E. Chase,
Boston*

Characters :

VINCENT ST. GEORGE.
TIMOTHY SNAPSHOT.
COLONEL JONATHAN SPOOLBY.
THOMAS BLORE.
SEMPRONIUS POTTLEBY.
SIMPKINS.
BLOATER.

ANGELINA (Blore's Ward).
EUPHRASIA SPOOLBY (Col. Spoolby's Wife).
PRUDENCE (The Dragon).
POLLY.
SUSIE.

Scene :—Act I. Bournemouth. Act II. Snapshot's Chambers in
London.

Time :—The Present.

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.

ACT I.

The beach at Bournemouth. In the background the sea. Chairs etc. dotted about.

Fisher girls are hauling a boat up. (L. to R.)

Voice of Fisherman (off L.) Ahoy! my lasses! Leave pulling! She's up now!

Polly. There! that's done; and now we can rest!

Susie. Can't rest long. Job's landed, but Solomon's in the offing—do you see his boat—way off yonder?

Polly. He won't get in under ten minutes. Let's go and see what Job has caught.

Susie (coiling the rope). Ay, ay! (*Exeunt L. U. E.*)

Enter ANGELINA and SNAPSHOT, R.

Angelina. How quickly we've come! Poor Guardy's a mile behind.

Snapshot. Let's sit down and wait for him.

Angelina (refusing to sit). You never came to the cinderella last night?

Snapshot. I couldn't. I had to see a friend off to Bristol. I got on to the wrong platform at the Junction and had to come home on a Goods train. So I never got in till one this morning.

Angelina. If you had been there you might have had a chance of fighting for me.

Snapshot. Fighting?—

Angelina. Yes.

Snapshot. Good gracious! With whom?

Angelina. I'll tell you all about it. I had just got into the room with Guardy. There was no chair vacant, so I was standing. Up comes a thin young man—oh, a very nice elegant and mild young man—everybody stared at him and

whispered "That's Mr. Vincent St. George, the Ladies' Champion." He gave me an exquisite bow, and said "Madam, you have no chair." "No, sir." "You shall have one in a moment." He went up to a very fat man sitting near the window. "Sir," said he, "give me that chair for a lady, for a lady who is on her feet while you are taking your ease." The fat man never said a word, and everybody laughed. "Give me that chair," cried Mr. St. George—only much louder—and he put his hand on it. Then the fat man rose very slowly, took the poor young man up by the collar and flung him out of window!

Snapshot (laughing). Good gracious!

Angelina. Fortunately it was on the ground floor—why, you are laughing!

Snapshot. I should think so! It must have been screamingly funny. I wish I had been there to see it.

Angelina (hurt). I saw nothing to laugh at. I was sorry you were not there to thrash the fat man. You *would* have thrashed him?

Snapshot. Oh, of course, of course!

Angelina. I knew you were a hero! (*bashfully*) When are you going to speak to Guardy?

Snapshot. In the course of the day—in the course of the day.

Angelina (looking off R.). He's caught us up. Shall we go on a little.

Snapshot. Certainly—certainly—if you don't think the sea will spoil your boots.

Angelina (hanging on his arm and looking into his face). Do you really love me as much as you say?

Snapshot. Quite so; quite so; mind the puddle. (*Exeunt L.*)

Enter BLORE and POTTLEBY, R.

Pottleby. My dear Blore, we have been boys together, and you know I'm not narrow. I like to see young people enjoying their youth—gathering rosebuds—gathering rosebuds. At the same time I venture to suggest that you let those two gather rather too many rosebuds.

Blore. Rosebuds? Rot. Where the dickens are they gathering rosebuds? Rosebuds on Bournemouth beach! Drive!

Pottleby. It's a figure of speech.

Blorc. Well, I don't like figures of speech. Say what you mean.

Pottleby. Very well, then, it seems to me Snapshot is courting your ward.

Blorc. "Seems"? don't say "seems."

Pottleby. Why not?

Blorc. Because there's no "seems" about it. It's perfectly plain he's courting her. Look at 'em! (*pointing off L.*) He's smiling at her—he takes her hand—What d'ye say to that, hey?—Mustn't say "seems"; say "It's perfectly plain."

Pottleby. Very well. It is perfectly plain. It is also perfectly plain that if you allow him to court her, I am playing a ridiculous part.

Blorc. Why ridiculous? Explain ridiculous.

Pottleby. I have opened my heart to you.

Blorc. That's a lie. You have *not* opened your heart to me. If you'd ever got such an unpleasant idea into your head I should have protested.

Pottleby. It's a figure of speech.

Blorc. Confound your figures of speech!

Pottleby. I told you I loved your ward and would marry her in spite of her absence of dowry. You allowed me to hope.

Blorc. Of course I allowed you to hope! But before I allowed you to hope I had allowed Mr. Snapshot to hope. He's Number One, you're Number Two. I shall have a clearing up with Number One to-day. Number One will marry or retire. If Number One retires, on comes Number Two.

Pottleby. Meanwhile Number One may win her heart; he may go too far.

Blorc. You're quite right: *he has gone too far.* (*calling*) Angelina!

Angelina (*off L.*) Yes Guardy!

Blorc. Come back! You've gone too far! Come back at once!

Angelina. Here we are, Guardy! (*Re-enters ANGELINA and SNAPSHOT L.*)

Blorc. Mr. Timothy Snapshot, we are going in, and my ward is about to read the city article aloud to me. If you would like to share in this little family diversion—

Snapshot. Thank you, but I am expecting letters, I shall stroll to the Post Office.

Blore. In one hour exactly I shall come for my bath. I should be glad to meet you; I have something to say.

Snapshot (aside). Oh lor, he's going to clinch it. *(Aloud).* Very well, sir, I will be here.

Angelina (aside to Blore). Oh, Guardy. here he is!

Blore. Who?

Angelina. The young man of last night.

Blore. The young man of the chair?

Angelina. Yes.

Blore. By Jove, so it is! Let's get in quickly.

Angelina. I should like to thank him—after all it was for my sake.

Blore. There's nothing to thank him about. If he got chucked out of window it was because he likes it.

Angelina. Poor young man!

Pottleby (laughing). He, he, he! It seems he had another adventure this morning. He nearly got killed. Let me tell you all about it. He had just broken a lance about a woman——

(St. G. appears R. He is reading a newspaper.)

Blore. Broken a lance!

Pottleby. It's a figure of speech.

Blore. Give my ward your arm, Mr. Pottleby, and tell us your story. In one hour, Mr. Snapshot.

Snapshot. In one hour, sir.

St. G. has come down C. BLORE, POTTLEBY & SNAPSHOT stare at him and nod mockingly. ANGELINA looks back and waves her hand in thanks. Exeunt BLORE, POTTLEBY and ANGELINA R I. SNAPSHOT L.

St. George. That young lady is charming—charming. What eyes! And how she looked at me! Positively, I feel cold all over. What! They say chivalry is dead, when there are angels like that to be chivalrous for! Here is one heart, at least, in which chivalry shall not die while there is a woman to protect. Where was I? *(Reading paper.)* "Is chivalry dead?" Fourth column, seventh letter—"And so, sir, I call on the young men of our generation to show what they are made of. I summon them never to raise a hand against a woman, except in self-defence, and I am, Yours faithfully, A MOTHER OF SEVEN."

Oh, "Mother of Seven," your words re-echo in my breast!

(Enter POLLY AND SUSIE hauling on a rope L).

Fisher Girls Hauling and Singing. "Heave-ho—heave-ho!"

St. George. What's that? Women?—Undoubtedly, women. (Takes off his hat.) What are you about—Ladies?

Polly (to Susie). Is he speaking to us?

Susie. He said "Ladies"! Are you speaking to us, kind gentleman?

St. George. With your permission. May I ask what you are doing?

Polly. We are hauling up Solomon's boat.

St. George. What! that boat with the men in it?

Polly. To be sure. And precious hard work it is. Heave aho—ho!

St. George (throwing down his paper). Solomon's a brute! Women, with a rough rope like that over their necks—like so many horses! It's monstrous—it's intolerable! Be good enough to stop that, ladies!

Polly. What's he up to?

St. George. Give me the rope. This is my business.

Susie. What larks!

St. George. Come, now, let go. (He takes the rope).

Polly. There you are, then!

ST. GEORGE is pulled nearly off his feet.

St. George. I say! Stop it!

Susie. Ah, she do tug—never mind, put yer back into it!

St. George. Never fear! (pulling). This is a noble deed. Woman is weak, man is strong. (Tug—moves back a step). It's tough work. But I shall do it. Physical strength is nothing. It's the will that does it. (Tug—two steps back). Good gracious!

Polly. You're not pulling hard enough.

St. George. All right, don't take any notice.

Susie. You're going backwards!

St. George (losing his temper). Not at all. I'm going ahead. I'm positive I'm going ahead. (Violent tug—three or four steps back.) Here, I say, Stop it! Solomon's a beast! Stop it! (He is pulled off his feet and dragged out on his back).

Polly. Oh, look! he's being pulled into the water!

Susie. He lets go just in time!

Polly. I'm glad of it: he called us Ladies.

Re-enter ST. GEORGE covered with sand.

St. George. Oh my back, my back! (*sits down.*)

Polly. You're not hurt, sir. The sand is soft.

St. George. It's beastly salt.

Susie. You were not strong enough, you see.

St. George. Don't talk nonsense; I'm as strong as a horse. Only my foot slipped. Never mind. Don't you ever forget that you are women, and that women are made to be adored and revered—

Fishermen (off L.) Hie you gals!

Polly (looking off.) Oh my! There's the boat drifting out to sea!

Fishermen (further off.) Now, you lazy baggages!

St. George. Baggages!—Don't notice their rudeness! Never forget that you are women,—and that you were made to be adored and revered

Polly. Oh, go along with your nonsense! Catch the rope, Susie. Ahoy! Ahoy! (*Exeunt girls L.*)

Enter PRUDENCE R. She stands watching ST. GEORGE.

St. George. Confound it, how salt it is! There they go—the blind fools—no idea of their sacredness! (*tries to get up*) Oh my back!

Prudence. Well, Master Vincent!

St. George (aside). The Dragon!—(*aloud*) Oh, Prudence, is that you?

Prudence. Oh, yes, it's me, right enough! So you've been knocked down again!

St. George. I have not been knocked down. I—I sat down—involuntarily.

Prudence. I was at the window, and I saw you roll. You did look funny! Have you broken anything?

St. George. No.

Prudence. I'm sorry.

St. George. Thank you.

Prudence. If you'd broken something, you'd have had to stay at home, instead of going about playing the fool.

St. George. It is not playing the fool to adore and reverence the ladies—

Prudence. What ladies?

St. George. Those that were here just now, amongst others.

Prudence. Pretty sort of ladies, indeed! Oh, don't speak to me! I haven't patience with you! It wouldn't matter so much if you were half a man!

St. George. Prudence!

Prudence. But *you*. Why, you're as weak as a rat.

St. George. Prudence!

Prudence. Arms like matches!

St. George. Prudence!

Prudence. And legs—oh, my goodness, look at your legs!

St. George. Prudence, you're a fool!

Prudence. That's how you speak to a lady is it?

St. George. Prudence, I regret to have to say that *your* language forces me to the conclusion you're not a lady.

Prudence. Don't talk your silly rubbish to me. Haven't I nursed you in these arms? And do you suppose I don't know what your legs are like? Look what you've done. There's the boat adrift, and it isn't your fault if the fishermen ain't all drowned. They'll come howling for your blood directly.

St. George. I'll face their howls!

Prudence. You'll have to leave the place.

St. George. I will leave the place! but what I've done here I'll do elsewhere. My mission is to make all women happy.

Prudence. Go along! You find one woman, and try to make *her* happy, and that'll fill up all your spare time.

St. George. I'm going in to get something to drink, to take the salt out of my mouth. And then I'll go for a ride.

Prudence. Go for a ride with all your bones broken! A nice sight you are on horseback, any way with your legs—

St. George. Prudence!

Prudence. Oh, get out! Haven't I nursed you in these arms—?

St. George. Once for all; the mere fact that you have nursed me on those particular arms does not give you the right to throw my legs in my teeth!

Prudence. Now, don't get cross. You shall not go for a ride—that's flat! I'll take you for a drive, by and by.

St. George. Well, well; have your own way.

Enter SNAPSHOT with a handful of letters. He picks up the newspaper.

Snapshot. Your paper, sir?

St. George. The *Daily Telegraph*? Thank you, sir. Oh, my back!

Prudence. Lean on me.

St. George (*leaning heavily on her arm*). That's a very polite young man. Listen to this, *Prudence* (*reading*). "Woman is the weaker vessel, and relies on man for support on all occasions."—How true.—How very true.

Exeunt L.

Snapshot. Wonder what mess he's been getting into now? Now for these letters; (*opening them rapidly one after the other*) "Sir, About that little account"—"Sir, Having to meet a heavy account"—"Sir. Unless my long-standing account"—"Sir, I must remind you of the account"—"Sir, I have placed my account"—There's a sameness of style about my correspondence which is almost monotonous. What's this? *Euphrasia's* writing! *Euphrasia's* my aunt by marriage—she's my uncle's wife. Now, what in the world can my aunt, *Euphrasia Spoolby*, have to say? Upon my soul, I'm a very unfortunate young man. I'm in love with *Angelina*—there's no possible doubt about that. And if *Angelina* has money she could bring a pleasing change into the style of my correspondence. On the other hand, if I marry *Angelina*, I lose my aunt. And if *Angelina* should happen to have no money, that would be a very pretty kettle of fish! "*Timothy*," said my aunt when she saw me off—she always sees me off—"Timothy, here are ten pounds—enjoy yourself. But, remember, if you get engaged I'll never speak to you again, and I'll cut you off with a shilling. I must have a harbour of refuge when that man gets unbearable"—"that man" is her husband. She's always on the point of leaving him, and she calls me her "harbour of refuge." Then there's *Spoolby's* point of view. "*Timothy*," said he, the last time I went to say good-bye to him—I always go to say good-bye to him—"Timothy, here are ten pounds—enjoy yourself. But, remember, if ever I find you interfering between *Euphrasia* and me, I'll cut you off with a shilling, and thrash you within an inch of your life." And he'd do it too, the fire-eating old colonel. Phew, it's precious hot! Hullo, here's a letter from *Simpkins*, my man. "Honoured sir, I have the pleasure to inform you that *Bloater* has quartered himself in your

Chambers. He's asleep on the sofa now with his feet on the cushions, which is why I write you these few lines. He talks of nothing but his little account, and he doesn't let me out of sight. Please do pay him." Pay him? Not much. I should have the whole crowd on me. He's my life-belt. He keeps me afloat. Now let's see what Euphrasia says. "The blow has fallen! That man has refused me the ponies. I shall rush to my harbour of refuge." Oh, dash it all! I must cut the knot.—Angelina.—If she has money.—Here's her guardian. Now for it.

Enter BLORE, POTTLEBY, AND ANGELINA. R.

Blore. You are punctual, Mr. Snapshot.

Snapshot. That is the least of my virtues!

ANGELINA crosses to SNAPSHOT.

Angelina. Speak to him, and deliver me from that horrible Pottleby.

Snapshot. That's what I'm here for. Is he in a good temper? *(They talk apart.)*

Pottleby. Now, I trust you are going to bring that young man up to the scratch.

Blore. Scratch? Scratch? What do you mean?

Pottleby. It's a figure of speech.

Blore. You've no business to use it. Couldn't you have said quite simply: "I anticipate that you are about to require that young gentleman to offer an explanation of his intentions." If you had used plain speech like that, I should have answered "Yes." *(Calling)* Angelina!

Angelina. Yes, Guardy! *(crosses to him.)*

Blore (to POTTLEBY). Take her to a safe distance and amuse her with a few epigrams.

Pottleby. I'll do my best. *(Leading ANGELINA up.)* Isn't the sea blue, Miss?

Angelina. Yes, sir.

Pottleby. I have only one objection to it. It is really too large. You feel small beside it. Even I, who am a fair man of my inches—well, I will confess that when you put me face to face with the ocean I feel comparatively insignificant.

ANGELINA sits down L. back. POTTLEBY sits beside her and goes on talking.

Blore. Now, Mr. Snapshot.

Snapshot. Now, sir.

Blore. You want to marry my ward.

Snapshot. I love her, sir, and I should call myself the happiest of men if you deigned to bless—

Blore. Business first, blessing afterwards. I will be frank with you. I am rich, and I spend my money freely; whence you might conclude that Angelina will have a large dowry. Nothing of the sort. She comes into one thousand pounds.

Snapshot. One thousand?

Blore. One.

Snapshot. A wealthy guardian has the privilege of adding a little something—

Blore. A wealthy guardian has also the privilege of refusing to add anything. That is the privilege I shall make use of. I shall not abstract anything from her dowry, because I am unwilling—

Snapshot (protesting). My dear sir!

Blore (coldly). To do anything illegal. But I will not add a farthing. I have spoken. Answer me briefly.

Snapshot. Sir, what I love in Miss Angelina is not the greater or less amount of money she may possess.

Blore. Well said, young man, well said.

Snapshot. But I will be as frank as you have been. I am riddled with debts. If you doubt my word, here is evidence—(showing letters).

Blore. Mr. Snapshot, you speak like a gentleman. I gather that I shall be obliging you by refusing you my ward's hand.

Snapshot. That was what I was driving at—

Blore. You will see that after this conversation—

Snapshot. In ten minutes I shall have left Bournemouth.

Blore. Capital.

Snapshot. Only allow me, so as to avoid a painful scene, to hide from Miss Angelina—

Blore. My dear Sir, I will take the responsibility of any lie you like to tell.

ANGELINA comes down to SNAPSHOT.

Angelina. Well?

Snapshot. Well, my darling, we are perfectly agreed.

Angelina. Really!

Snapshot. Only I've got to go and get some necessary papers. I'll be back directly.

Angelina. Directly?

Snapshot. In five minutes. (*ANGELINA crosses R.*)

Blore (to SNAPSHOT). I rely on your word.

Snapshot. I'm going to London by the next train.

Exit L.

Blore. Number One done—gone to London. Number Two it's time for you.

Angelina. What do you mean?

Blore. I mean that you'll never be Mrs. Snapshot.

Angelina. Isn't he coming back?

Blore. You *will* be Mrs. Pottleby.

Angelina. Never!

Blore. You should never say never. I beg, in the most formal manner possible, to present Mr. Sempronius Pottleby to you. He will be your husband in six weeks.

Pottleby. Believe me—if the affection of a life-time—

Angelina. But I love my Timothy!

Blore Pottleby. That is your Sempronius's business.

Angelina. And my Timothy loves me!

Blore. I won't contradict you.

Angelina. Do not sacrifice me!

Blore. Permit me to point out that you are hurting your Sempronius's feelings.

Angelina. Have some mercy! If you won't let me marry Timothy, at least don't force me to marry another.

Pottleby. Miss Angelina—!

Blore. You're hurting your Sempronius's feelings more and more, just look at his face.

Angelina. But, Guardy!

Blore. We will resume this conversation later. I ought to have been in the water ten minutes ago. Come, let's go and bathe.

Pottleby (aside to BLORE). I say, she's crying, Blore,—she's sobbing.

Blore. Let her sob. It'll use her up.

Pottleby. But I should like to stay and wipe away her tears!—

Blore. She wouldn't like it. She hates you.

Pottleby. Do you think so?

Blore. I know it. Come and have a bath. I'll duck you. You'll make faces when the water gets in your mouth. That'll make me laugh. Come along.

Pottleby. Miss Angelina—(*ANGELINA bends her head without answering*). I say, Blore, look how she's drooping on her stalk!

Blore. What do you mean by her stalk? You're mixed, my good friend. Women haven't got any stalks—flowers have stalks.

Pottleby. It's a figure of speech. (*Exeunt L. U. E.*)

Angelina. Oh how wretched I am! How can I escape? They will drag me to the altar in spite of my tears. They will marry me to Sempronius—and then—what will be the good of tears then? (*She sits crying on a rock, L.*)

Enter ST. GEORGE, R.

St. George. What do I see? A woman weeping by the sad sea waves, in an attitude expressive of a broken heart?

Angelina (to herself). Alas!

St. George. She said "Alas"! It's quite mediæval, unless I'm very much mistaken this is the biggest thing I've been in.

Angelina. No hope is left!

St. George. Oh, dash it, I can't stand this!—Ow, my ribs!—(*recognizes her*) By jove! It's the maid I got hurled out of window for; it's the girl with the eyes!—(*to her*) Madam—

Angelina. Is it you sir? were you here?—

St. George. Yes—I saw you weeping—

Angelina. I was not weeping.

St. George. Indeed, but you were.

Angelina. No, I assure you I was not. I have to thank you, sir—

St. George. To thank me?—

Angelina. Last night—the chair—

St. George. Oh, that was nothing.

Angelina. The fat man—

St. George. Don't let us think of that—

Angelina. The window—

St. George. Please!—

Angelina. You fell—

St. George. I tell you it was nothing—

Angelina. You must have hurt yourself—

St. George. Please, *please* don't mention it.

Angelina. I am so glad to have met you—I am so grateful—and I wanted to tell you—(*breaking down*) Oh, I am so miserable! (*Crosses.*)

St. George. Miserable!—You!—Why?—If by getting thrown out of window again—!

Angelina. They want to marry me.

St. George. To marry you?—

Angelina. Yes; to Sempronius Pottleby!

St. George. What a horrible name!

Angelina. Yes, and a horrible man. Look—there he is. There! My guardian is making him swallow the water—do you see him?

St. George. He does look hideous while he's swallowing!

Angelina. Oh yes, and even when he isn't!

St. George. True; but his ugliness is in a quieter style then. Then you don't love him? To be sure, how should you? You can't love a man who is called Pottleby and is fat. A man must be thin—

Angelina (enthusiastically). Slender, Oh, yes!

St. George. Thin and tall.

Angelina. Not too tall.

St. George. And fair.

Angelina. No, dark.

St. George. Dark? Do you think so? Hum! I thought, perhaps, if he were thin and tall and fair—

Angelina. No; he must be slender, not too tall and dark; like Mr. Snapshot.

St. George. Snapshot? Do you love Snapshot?

Angelina. Oh, if you only knew him!

St. George. I do know him—slightly—he picked up my newspaper. He is very polite. And does he love you?

Angelina (enthusiastically). Oh, a thousand times more even than I love him!

St. George. And they have separated you?

Angelina. Yes, he went to London in the last train, crying all the way. I know he'll kill himself.

St. George. Think so?

Angelina. And I shall kill myself, too. I *will not* survive him!

St. George. Why wouldn't your guardian consent?

Angelina. I don't know.

St. George. I can guess. The young man is poor?

Angelina (rapturously). Oh, so deliciously poor!

St. George. I thought as much. (*takes stage*) Oh! Society! Here is a young couple; handsome interesting,

devoted to each other, deliciously poor; nature has positively done everything to unite them—but society steps between, and forbids the banns!

Angelina. I don't understand you.

St. George. Ha! But I am here! You see before you a man who obeys the mandates of nature, and doesn't care a rap for Society. The youth loves you—you love him—you *must* marry him—you *shall* marry him—you *will* marry him—in short, consider yourself married to him!

Angelina. I beg your pardon?

St. George (melodramatically). Listen! The moments are precious.

Angelina. I am listening.

St. George. Do you wish to be happy?

Angelina. Of course!

St. George. And if I say you *must* be brave, you must shut your eyes, and trust in me?

Angelina (rather frightened). Oh, I know you are a respectable young man, but—

St. George. But me no buts! Will you face anything rather than Pottleby?—Look at him!

Angelina. Yes, anything!

St. George. Do you know Mr. Snapshot's London address?

Angelina. Yes, but why—?

Enter PRUDENCE R.

Prudence. The carriage is waiting, Master Vincent.

St. George. The carriage! Fate has sent it!

Prudence. Gracious, no! It came from the livery stables. Are you coming? You see, I'm all rigged out.

St. George. You did well to rig yourself out, estimable old woman! Give me that bonnet! (*He tears it off her head.*)

Prudence. Gracious alive!

St. George (to Angelina). Put it on Miss! (*Thrusting it on her.*)

Angelina. What are you doing?

St. George (to Prudence). Give me that shawl!

Prudence. Any thing else!

St. George. Put it on, Miss!

Angelina. But I must know—!

St. George. Prudence, take the next train, and wait for me at home. I am bound on a journey. Now, Miss Angelina. (*Drags her R.*)

Angelina. Where are we going?

St. George. To London!

Angelina. I'd rather not!

St. George. Must I force you!

Angelina. Help! Help!

St. George. I said you should marry the man you love, and you shall marry the man you love, or my name's not St. George! (*He lifts her up and carries her bodily off R.*)

Prudence. Hie! Master Vincent! Master Vincent! Oh, my goodness! That the last straw. Now he's gone and bolted with Mr. Blore's ward!

Enter the Fishergirls R.

Polly. Where is he? Where is your master?

Susie. He nearly drowned our sweethearts!

Voices (off). There he goes! Stop him!

Polly. Oh, look! he's got a young girl along of him!

Susie. Mr. Blore's ward! (*Calling off L.*) Mr. Blore!

Mr. Blore! Quick!

Enter BLORE and POTTLEBY in bathing blanket L.

Curtain.

Blore. What's the matter?

Polly. Your ward has been and bolted.

Blore. Bolted!

Susie. Yes, with Mr. St. George—the wrecker!—the ruffian.

Blore. After him, Pottleby!

Pottleby. May love lend me pinions!

Blore. Pinions! What next!

Pottleby. It's a figure of speech.

Chorus. There he goes! The girl's waving her hand-herchief! After them! After them!

Curtain.



Act II.

SNAPSHOT'S chambers. Doors R. and L. Window C. with long curtains. Photographs and knickknacks about. Books on table. Elegant furniture. SIMPKINS AND BLOATER.

Bloater. It's a bloomin' shime—that's wot it is, Mr. Simpkins—(up and down).

Simpkins. How, my good Mr. Bloater—

Bloater. It's a bloomin' shime! He's been in town since last night—I know he has!

Simpkins. Quite right. You're always right. He's been in town right enough, but he hasn't been here. The moment he comes home I'll tell him you've called. He'll be sorry to miss you—very sorry—very sorry.

Bloater. I shall come back in 'arf an hour.

Simpkins. What, really! Do you mean to say we shall have the pleasure of seeing you again in half an hour?

Bloater. And if I don't 'ev the pleasure of seein' my money yer master 'll 'ear from me—that's all—you tell 'im 'e'll 'ear from me.

Exit R.

Simpkins. Let's hope it'll be good news, Mr. Bloater. If it was bad news he'd never get over it—he's so sensitive! (shuts the door and comes down) At last! But it was warm work!

Enter SNAPSHOT L.

Snapshot. Is he gone?

Simpkins. Yessir.

Snapshot. Which was it?

Simpkins. Which was it? It was Bloater—the inevitable, the everlasting Bloater. He's lost all sense of decency, that man has. He wanted to kick up a row. He wanted to bag the clock.

Snapshot. Eh?

Simpkins. To bag the clock. But I defended it with my life.

Snapshot. That's right.

Simpkins. I defended it with my life from the infuriated Bloater because I've got my own little amount, Sir, and if I let the infuriated Bloater walk off with the furniture, I should have no security. Perhaps you'd like to square my little account, Sir?

Snapshot. Oh, shut your head! (*He sits and takes up a paper.*)

Simpkins. Perhaps you'll excuse me if I keep my head open. I have dusted your room, varnished your boots, and resisted the Bloater—so much for the servant. Now for the Creditor (*Takes a memorandum book out of his pocket*).

Snapshot. Oh, lor!

Simpkins. My little account amounts to twenty five pounds, seven shillings, and sixpence—

Snapshot. Very likely.

Simpkins. Here are the items. I always carry 'em about. Item: two months' wages. You know I've been here six weeks—we call it two months so as to get rid of the odd days—

Snapshot. Get on.

Simpkins. Item: two stalls at the Lyceum for your greengrocer, to keep your greengrocer quiet.

Snapshot. Get on.

Simpkins. Item: fourteen stalls at the Gaiety on fourteen different occasions—for yourself; together with fourteen bouquets—

Snapshot. Oh, I know your little account by heart! You know perfectly well I've got no money.

Simpkins. You must try to find some, sir.

Snapshot. I shall find some all right, if you only give me a little peace. But if you go on worrying like this—

Simpkins. Oh, Sir, that is so stale.

Snapshot. What!

Simpkins. I am not speaking as the servant: I am speaking as the creditor. And that phrase is really so very stale. Every time I use it on Bloater, Bloater smiles grimly.

Snapshot. Add a sovereign to your account, Simpkins, and get out.

Simpkins. A sovereign, sir? Yes, sir. That would make it twenty-six, seven, six—say twenty-seven pounds so as to get rid of the odd half-pence.

Snapshot. All right ; twenty-seven be it.

Simpkins. Now, to prove my gratitude, I'll give you a last word of advice.

Snapshot. Get out !

Simpkins. I am not speaking as the servant nor the creditor now, but as the friend. Pay Bloater, sir ; pay Bloater ; and pay Simpkins ; that's the friendly word : pay Simpkins. (*Exit R.*)

Snapshot. Pay Simpkins ! Why, my rooms would be crowded in five minutes. In defending me he defends himself. Pay Bloater ! That *would* be foolery. Bloater is, as I have previously mentioned, my life-belt. I only owe him fifteen pounds, and he worries his own life out about it and mine too. So that all my creditors—my really serious creditors—say, "If Mr. Snapshot puts up with such an intolerable nuisance about such a trifling sum, it's because he really hasn't got any money." And so they keep quiet. Why, if I were to pay Bloater, I should have all the tradesmen in London here in an hour—and the room isn't big enough ! (*A ring.*) Hulloa, what's that ? (*Calling.*) Simpkins ! Simpkins !

Enter SIMPKINS R.

Simpkins. Yessir !

Snapshot. Didn't you hear the bell ?

Simpkins. Yessir, but there's no hurry. It's Bloater. He said he should come back in half-an-hour.

Snapshot. You must receive him. I'm going for a walk.

Simpkins. Are you going to leave me with him again, sir ? Oh, sir, that is not kind.

Snapshot (aside). This is a good opportunity to go and throw a little cold water on Aunt Euphrasia. I found three more letters from her when I got home. She seems determined to leave Spoolby—(*a ring*).

Simpkins. You can't get out, sir, you'll tumble right into Bloater's arms—he's at the door.

Snapshot (pointing L). There's the back staircase. Oh, Angelina ! why hadn't you at least ten thousand pounds ! (*Exit L. The bell is rung violently.*)

Simpkins. Coming, coming ! (*Opens door R.*) Mr. Snapshot has not come in, Mr. Bloater—he'll be sorry to miss you, very sorry—very—why, it isn't Bloater after all !

Enter ST. GEORGE R.

St. George. Is this Mr. Snapshot's?

Simpkins. Yessir.

St. George. Is he at home?

Simpkins. No, sir, he'll be sorry to miss you—very sorry—very sorry—

St. George. Not at home? So much the better!
(*examines the room*).

Simpkins (aside). Now, that's a new one—don't know him—he's been dug up at Bournemouth, I suppose.

St. George. Respectable chambers—furnished with good taste. Elegant and simple.

Simpkins. How closely he examines the furniture! Can he be going to seize it?

St. George (opening book). What's this?

Simpkins. He is coming to seize it!

St. George. Oh, shocking! (*he pockets the book*).

Simpkins. What's he up to?—Look here; I've got my little account, too; and I protest. Besides that's not the legal way to do it.

St. George. What's the matter?

Simpkins. The book you've just—

St. George. Pocketed? Of course I have. Look at it --OUIDA!! if that fell into her hands—!

Simpkins. Whose hands?

St. George. And this photograph! Oh shocking!
(*touching it*).

Simpkins. Just you leave that photograph alone! I wouldn't let Bloater bag the Clock. I'm not going to let you bag the photos.

St. George. I'm not going to bag it: I'm only going to turn it round. Supposing she were to see it!

Simpkins. She! Who, she?

St. George. Yes, she—down stairs.

Simpkins. Down stairs?

St. George. What's this room? (*Opening door L.*)

Simpkins. That's the study—I say, you're very young for a broker.

St. George (quietly). I'm not a broker. She'll be able to wait quite comfortably there. I'll fetch her. She's downstairs. (*R*).

Simpkins. So you said.

St. George. She's in the cab. I'll fetch her.

(Exit R.)

Simpkins. 'Pon my soul he's amusing, that chap is. He's amusing. He's quite in a different style. Yes, but he's bagged the book. There *are* people like that. They come into a house—they take up a book, they say they're coming back again in five minutes; and in three minutes they've sold the book round the corner for threepence, and you never see 'em again. That's friendship, that is. By jove, he is coming back! *(Opens door R.)* and with her! positively with her!

Enter ST. GEORGE and ANGELINA, R. ANGELINA is thickly veiled and wears PRUDENCE'S bonnet and shawl.

St. George. Please walk in.

Angelina. Are these his chambers?

St. George. Yes; don't be afraid.

Angelina. Oh, what an adventure!—Who is that?

St. George. That is his servant—and yours!

(Offers her a chair, L.)

Simpkins. Oh, he's a lunatic! *(a ring)*

Angelina. There's someone coming!

Simpkins. Perhaps it's his keeper, come to fetch him! that would be a pity—he's amusing!—*(exit R.)*

Angelina. No doubt it's he! Oh, to see him again!—all at once—like this—I can't do it—prepare him.

St. George. You are right—it might be better.—Step in here and wait.

Angelina. Be sure to tell him it is all your doing—

St. George. Yes, yes, don't be afraid. *(Exit ANGELINA)*

L. Enter BLOATER and SIMPKINS, R.)

Simpkins. My master is not in, Mr. Bloater—he'll be sorry to miss you—very sorry—very sorry.

Bloater. 'Ev yer got any money for me?

Simpkins. I haven't got any money, but if you'd like to see a lunatic—

Bloater (breaking out). If I want to see a lunatic, I've only got to look in the glass. If I hadn't been a lunatic I shouldn't have lent Mr. Snapshot fifteen pounds *(sits near table).*

St. George (attentive). What's that?

Bloater (aside to SIMPKINS). Who's that?

Simpkins. That's the lunatic. He's very amusing—you watch—he'll make you laugh.

Bloater. I don't feel like laughing!

St. George. What were you saying? weren't you speaking of a loan?

Simpkins. Yes, he was speaking of a little matter of fifteen pounds he has lent my master. (*Aside to BLOATER.*) Now you just listen. He's sure to say something funny.

St. George. Fifteen pounds! And you are making all this fuss for fifteen pounds! (*Taking out his purse.*) Here, take it, Mr. Snapshot will pay me. (*Gives BLOATER bank-notes.*)

Bloater (to SIMPKINS). Why he's a piyin' me!—he's pide me!

Simpkins (thunderstruck). He's paid Bloater!

Bloater (to ST. GEORGE). Oh, Sir—'ow kin I—

St. George (to SIMPKINS). What's your name, my good fellow?

Simpkins. Simpkins, Sir.

St. George. Very well, Simpkins, show this gentleman out.

Simpkins. Yessir, certainly sir.

Bloater. I'm a goin' sir, I'm a-going! I've been pide! Oh my goodness, I've bin pide well, I'll tell the whole town! (*Exit followed by SIMPKINS R.*)

St. George. He has debts! I thought as much. That's why the guardian refused.

Simpkins (re-entering). He's paid Bloater. Why shouldn't he pay Simpkins?

St. George. That fellow was making a great cry about a very little wool. Has he gone?

Simpkins. Has he gone?—No, sir, he has *not* gone.

St. George. What?

Simpkins (pathetically). He made a great cry because he was owed more than fifteen pounds. He dared not say how much he was owed before a stranger—he's so sensitive.

St. George. How much more is he owed?

Simpkins. Twenty-seven—thirty pounds more, sir,—say thirty-five, so as to get rid of the odd half-pence.

St. George (taking out his pocket-book). Why, give it him, and let him go.

Simpkins (counting notes). He's harmless—quite harmless. He's paid Simpkins!

St. George. Give it to him at once.

Simpkins. To be sure, sir, to be sure (*goes slowly R.*)
St. George. Poor Angelina! I hope she hasn't heard all this! (*Exit L.*)

Simpkins. He's paid Simpkins! (*Comes back.*) I wonder whether what I've done has been quite delicate? I wish I wasn't so sensitive where money is concerned—

(*Enter SNAPSHOT R.*)

Simpkins. Oh, sir, I've had such fun!

Snapshot (sulky). Have you? Well, I haven't. I didn't find Spoolby or Euphrasia at home.

Simpkins. You've got a lunatic, sir, (*pointing L.*). He's in there, with the veiled lady.

Snapshot. A veiled lady—here?

Simpkins. Yessir.

Snapshot. 'Tis she! She has carried out her threat. She has left Spoolby! She has come to her harbour of refuge! It is Euphrasia!

Simpkins. I don't know whether she's called Euphrasia, she came with the lunatic.

Snapshot. The lunatic?

Simpkins. Yes. You'll see. I've had such fun. You have your fun, too. Oh, he's quite harmless. He's has got a mania for pocketing your books, turning your photos to the wall, and paying your debts.

Snapshot. Paying my debts!

Simpkins. Yessir. You don't owe me a farthing. He's paid me!

Snapshot (despairingly). By Jove!

Simpkins. I must say, I gave him a leg up, so to speak—but—

Snapshot. What are you talking about? (*goes L. As he is about to open the door, enter ST. GEORGE.*) The Bournemouth man!

St. George. Simpkins.

Simpkins. Yessir.

St. George. You may go.

Simpkins. Yessir! (*Exit R.*)

Snapshot. How the doose did Euphrasia pick him up? (*aloud and rapidly to ST. GEORGE offering a chair and sitting down.*) You know my aunt, Euphrasia Spoolby? I didn't know you knowed her—I mean I didn't know you knew her—But as you know her, you know just as well as I

know, all there is to know in the way of excuse for her. She's my aunt—she's very proud of me—she's got a fiery temper—Spoolby irritates her. Good fellow, Spoolby—but irritating—irritates me often—irritates her all the time. That woman is just one nerve, sir—so you mustn't—What are you doing?

(*St. George has taken out a memorandum book.*)

St. George (quite calmly). I believe you said Euphrasia Spoolby?

Snapshot. Of course I did.

St. George. What address did you mention?

Snapshot. What do you mean? *Don't* you know my Aunt Euphrasia?

St. George. Never saw her in my life; but that's nothing to do with it. I'll protect her all the same—the address?

Snapshot. But then, sir, let me ask you what the mischief are you doing here, and who the mischief is the lady in there?

St. George. Doesn't your heart tell you?

Snapshot. No; but I'll jolly soon—(*going L.*)

St. George (stopping him). If this Mrs. Euphrasia Spoolby is unhappy, it is, perhaps, because instead of marrying the man she loved she has married another.

Snapshot. Very likely—but—

St. George. Yesterday I was at Bournemouth.

Snapshot. I know it; let me pass.

St. George (stopping him). There I met a young girl who also was in love, who also was condemned by a barbarous guardian to marry against her will.

Snapshot. By a bar—

St. George. —barous guardian. That young girl awakened my interest. I foresaw for her in the future a lot similar to that of Mrs. Euphrasia Spoolby—so then—

Snapshot. Then—?

St. George. I resolved she should marry where she loved!

Snapshot. Well?

St. George. So I abducted her, and brought her to him who loves her—to him whom she loves.

Snapshot. Angelina!

St. George. Angelina is here!

Snapshot. Oh, lord!

St. George (calling L.) Come forth, sweet maid!
(*Moving L.*)

Snapshot (frantic). Stop! stop!—I'm—I'm speechless—What the doose have you done?

St. George. (Same business). Come forth, sweet maid!

Snapshot. Angelina here! Why it's enough to ruin me!

St. George. The guardian will have to pardon you. Come forth, sweet maid! Let me let her come forth!

Snapshot. But—!

St. George. I want to see you in each others' arms. That shall be my reward!

Snapshot. But what the Dickens am I to do with her when I've got her?

St. George. Can you ask? Marry her!

Snapshot. Marry her! I *can't* marry her.

St. George. I beg your pardon?

Snapshot. I'll never marry her!

St. George. What!

Snapshot. This marriage is out of the question.

St. George. Out of the question.

Enter SIMPKINS R.

Simpkins. Another veiled lady, sir.

Snapshot (speechless). Euphrasia!

St. George. A veiled lady!—So, sir, *that's* why this marriage is impossible! Very well; pack her off!

Snapshot. Pack her—?

St. George. Off! I will join the sweet maid. I will try to make her bear the delay. I give you five minutes. Be cruel, if necessary. If the second veiled lady suffers much, you shall give me her address by-and-bye and I'll console her when I've got this job out of hand. *Simpkins!*

Simpkins. Yessir!

St. George. Show the second veiled lady up.

Simpkins. Yessir. (*coming back*) Oh, one moment. (*to SNAPSHOT*). While I think of it, here's Bloater's receipt. (*gives him a paper.*)

Snapshot. Bloater's re—?

Simpkins. Ceipt. Yessir. (*pointing to ST. GEORGE.*) He paid Bloater.

Snapshot (screaming). This is the last straw! (to ST. GEORGE). Did you pay Bloater?

St. George. Oh, don't mention it. Between you and me £50 are a mere trifle. Pack her off. You have five minutes. (at door L.)

Snapshot. Fifty pounds?

St. George. Five minutes! (Exit L.)

Snapshot. Fifty pounds! What does he mean?

Simpkins (confusedly). Oh, he's a lunatic. He means fifteen. (Exit R.)

Snapshot. Angelina—Euphrasia—The Bournemouth man—and Bloater paid—what's to become of me? (He leans against a chair. SIMPKINS shows in EUPHRASIA, and exit R.)

Euphrasia. Timothy! (she throws her cloak on a chair).

Snapshot. You here, aunty?—I hardly expected—

Euphrasia. Your Uncle Spoolby is a monster!

Snapshot (aside). Bang!

Euphrasia. A monster. Don't you hear?

Snapshot. Perfectly. You were remarking that your husband—

Euphrasia. He is no longer my husband!

Snapshot. Oh, come, I say!

Euphrasia. It's horrible—I can't stand it—I can't stand it—I can't stand it! (She tears her gloves off and throws them on the table).

Snapshot. Why, what's he done?

Euphrasia. He's a monster. He's refused me the ponies. He refused to take me to Bournemouth, when he knew perfectly well I was dying to see you.

Snapshot (aside). What will Angelina think?

Euphrasia. But it's all over!

Snapshot. What are you going to do?

Euphrasia. You must take me to your Aunt Mary.

Snapshot. I! (EUPHRASIA sits L.) (aside) She's making herself at home!

Euphrasia. I have warned him. I left a letter for him. Listen; this is the letter: "I hate you. You will never see me again, I am gone to my sister's" Then I took a cab and drove to the station.

Snapshot. Of course, that's the usual way.

Euphrasia. I had no intention of coming here. I knew if Spoolby found me here, he'd cut you off with a shilling.

Snapshot. And thrash me within an inch of my life—Go on—don't mind me.

Euphrasia. So I said "I will not bother Timothy." Only I am superstitious, and I added, if I miss the train, I will take it as an omen that I am to go and see Timothy. I got to the station five minutes before the train started.

Snapshot. Very well, then?

Euphrasia. Very well: then I said to myself—What can I do with these five minutes?—and so I came here.

Snapshot. Perfectly logical.

Euphrasia. Timothy, I want sympathy, you are my harbour of my refuge. You will always be my harbour of refuge, won't you Timothy? Look here! I know your expenses are heavy. Here are ten pounds: enjoy yourself—but, remember, if ever you get engaged, I'll cut you off with a shilling!

Enter SIMPKINS (R.)

Simpkins. Colonel Spoolby, Sir!

Snapshot (with horror). Uncle Spoolby!

Euphrasia. My husband!

Simpkins. Her husband!—Oh lor! (*Runs to door R. which he holds ajar.*)

Snapshot. Did you say I was in?

Simpkins. You're always in to him, you know.

Euphrasia. Where can I hide? (*opens door L. and screams*) Oh! A woman! (*sternly*) Timothy!

Snapshot. Yes, yes, I'll explain the woman!—

St. George (appearing at door L.) You haven't packed her off! We've been here an hour!

Simpkins (holding door ajar, R.) Look sharp, mum, he's taking off his coat!

Snapshot (looking for a hiding place). Good gracious! Ah, (*at window*) this curtain!

Euphrasia (motionless). But, the woman!

Snapshot. I tell you I'll explain the woman! (*Pushes her in window.*)

Simpkins. He's got his coat off!

Snapshot. (*Seeing the cloak on the chair.*) What am I to do with this cloak?

St. George (L.) What are you doing? The five minutes are up.

Snapshot. Take that! (*He hurls the cloak at him, and thrusts him in L., slamming the door.*)

Simpkins (announcing). The husband!—er—I mean Colonel Spoolby!

Enter SPOOLBY R.

Spoolby. What's the fool saying? (*Exit Simpkins R.*)

Snapshot (aside). He's got his wife's letter, and he's come to cut me off with a shilling!

Spoolby (jovially). Well, are you all right, dear boy?

Snapshot. Pretty well, thanks.

Spoolby. So'm I; so'm I. When did you get back?

Snapshot. Last night.

Spoolby. Have a good time?

Snapshot. First rate.

Spoolby. You came to see me just now?

Snapshot. Yes, but you weren't in, you know, you weren't in.

Spoolby. I know that. What are you talking about?

Snapshot. Nothing—nothing—I was joking.

Spoolby. Rather weak, wasn't it? (*puts his hat on a chair up stage*).

Snapshot (aside). She's shaking the curtain!—she's furious!

Spoolby. I got home just after you'd been.

Snapshot. Oh?

Spoolby. My servant handed me some letters and your card.

Snapshot. Lost!

Spoolby. I left the letters on my desk and hurried off to see you.

Snapshot (with a shout). What! Do you mean to say you didn't open a single letter?

Spoolby. Not one. I was too eager to see you. You didn't find your aunt at home either, did you?

Snapshot. No, she was out.

Spoolby. I know where she is.

Snapshot. You know where—?

Spoolby. Of course I do. We've got a dinner-party to-night. She's gone to the pastry cook's. What are you dancing about like that for?

Snapshot. I? Oh nothing, nothing.

Spoolby. The Ozone has braced you up, eh?

Snapshot. Ozone—exactly—(*aside*) Oh, that curtain!
Spoolby (*Turning his back to door L.*) Well, what's the news?

Snapshot. I don't know. There doesn't seem to be any (*aside*). Is he never going?

St. George (*opening door L.*). Come Sir! the five minutes!

Snapshot. Oh lor! (*He leaps at the door and slams it on*
 ST. GEORGE.)

Spoolby. What's the matter?

Snapshot. Nothing. I was only shutting the door.

Spoolby. Did you have any fun at Bournemouth?

Snapshot. Oh, huge fun—huge fun!

Spoolby. Your aunt wanted to run down awfully. We had a row about it. She's very irritating, you know. She's just one great nerve. But I was firm. I told her I had business in Town (*nudges SNAPSHOT*). Same old story, you know. They always swallow it. It's no fun travelling with your wife—especially when she's just one great nerve. Then she tried to make me make up for it by giving her a pair of ponies. Not I! I've other fish to pay for with my money. So now she's in her tantrums.

Snapshot (*agonised*). You ought to make allowances for her.

Spoolby. Now look here, Timothy; none of that! I know your expenses are heavy—there are ten pounds. Enjoy yourself. But, remember; if ever I catch you interfering between Euphrasia and me, I'll cut you off with a shilling, and thrash you within an inch of your life! (*Puts banknotes on table and sees gloves*) Hulloo, hulloo, hulloo! What's this?

Snapshot. What's what?

Spoolby. Why, you only came home last night, and you've had time for this sort of thing! Timothy, you're a dog!

Snapshot. My dear uncle, you're quite mistaken; those are my gloves.

Spoolby. What! we'll soon see that. Stretch out your hand! Oh! (*bursting out laughing*) Ha! ha! ha!

Snapshot. What the doose is there to laugh at in my gloves?

Spoolby (*opposite curtain*). I'm not laughing at your gloves. I'm laughing at your boots!

Snapshot. My boots!

Spoolby. Yes! there! under the curtain! Aren't they yours? Hulloo! they're moving!—moving all by themselves!

Snapshot (threateningly). Uncle Spoolby!

Spoolby. All right my boy; don't lose your temper. No wonder you've been dancing about like a cat on hot bricks! Why didn't you say I was in the way?

Snapshot. Well; then, you *are* in the way.

Spoolby. I'm off. By jove! they're dooced pretty boots. I say, Timothy, my boy, let's have a peep!

Snapshot (choking). Uncle; I'll make a clean breast of it. I am engaged to marry the young lady behind the curtain. Your wife, Aunt Euphrasia, has threatened to cut me off with a shilling if I ever got engaged. So when you were announced, I hid the young lady behind the curtain because I thought Aunt Euphrasia was with you. And that's the long and the short of it! (*aside*) What invention!

Spoolby. I'm delighted to hear it! Have her out, my boy! Let's have a look at her.

Snapshot. She'd be too confused. She wouldn't come for worlds. (*To Curtain.*) You wouldn't come for worlds, would you? (*Curtain violently shaken.*) You see?

Spoolby (to Curtain). My dear young lady, you shouldn't be so hard on an old fellow who dotes on a pretty face (*Curtain violently shaken*). You were quite right to run away from Euphrasia. Euphrasia's irritating—very irritating (*shake*). She's a cat. (*Furious shake.*) But never run away from Uncle Spoolby—fat old Uncle Spoolby—good old Uncle Spoolby—Uncle Spoolby dotes on a pretty face.

Snapshot (nearly crazy). For goodness sake be off! Don't you see how you're frightening her?

Spoolby. Well, well, I'm going. (*To Curtain.*) You're the first pretty girl I've frightened, my dear. Say no more, I'm off. (*Exit R.*)

Snapshot (rushing to curtain). He's gone, aunty!—he's gone! he's gone!

Euphrasia (white with fury). Oh, that man! that man! Fat old Uncle Spoolby—good old Uncle Spoolby—Uncle Spoolby dotes on a pretty face, does he? I'll scratch his eyes out!

Snapshot. Be calm—be calm!

Euphrasia. You're just as bad! What about the

woman in there? I'll have it out with her, now while I'm in the humour. (*Rushes to door L., and opens it.*) Come out, miss!

St. George (entering L.) What's all this about? Come out, sweet maid—have no fear; I am here!

Angelina (entering L.) What is to become of me?

Snapshot. Bang! there they are—face to face!

St. George. The five minutes are up. Why haven't you packed her off?

Euphrasia. Packed whom off?

Angelina. Another woman!—Ah! he loves her! That's why he left Bournemouth!

Snapshot. My dearest Angelina, I beseech you!—

Euphrasia. Bournemouth! He got engaged to her at Bournemouth!

Snapshot. My dearest Aunt Euphrasia, I beseech you!—

St. George. Euphrasia! Are you Euphrasia Spoolby?

Euphrasia. What if I am!

St. George. I know all about you. Mr. Snapshot has given me every information!—excepting the address.

Euphrasia. Information!

St. George. I know you are wretched, your husband is a monster—he has refused you the ponies—

Euphrasia. Who is *this* man?

St. George. I will attend to your little matter as soon as I have done with this sweet maid here: as soon as she has married Mr. Snapshot, who loves her.

Euphrasia (to SNAPSHOT). You dare love her!

Snapshot. I! Not the least in the world!—that is—

Angelina. Do you hear him! He says he does not love me!

Snapshot. I never said any such thing!

St. George. Then why haven't you packed this lady off, as you promised?

Euphrasia. Did you promise to pack me off?

Snapshot. Nothing of the sort!

St. George. You shall explain your behaviour, Sir!

Snapshot. Very well—so I will—to you—not before the ladies.

St. George. So be it.

Snapshot (opening door L.). Come Sir.

St. George. Fear nothing, ladies; I will never desert you.

Snapshot. Step in, step in.

St. George (to the ladies) I will never desert you ;

(*Exit L. SNAPSHOT shuts the door on him, locks it, and drops the key.*)

Snapshot. So! Now we can talk!

Euphrasia (with sarcasm). Talk, then!

Snapshot. Aunt, hear me swear!

St. George (within, L.) Hie! let me out!

Angelina. Well, sir?

Snapshot. Angelina, hear me swear!

St. George (within). Open the door!

Euphrasia (to Snapshot). You are not talking.

Snapshot (at his wit's end). What on earth am I to say!

St. George (within). Open the door!

Enter SIMPKINS, R.

Simpkins (aside). I'm going to make a sensation!
(*aloud*) Colonel Spoolby, sir!

Euphrasia. My husband again! (*rushes to the window*)

Angelina. A stranger! Oh, let me hide! (*indicates door L.*) In here! Ah, it is locked!

Snapshot. Where on earth is the key?

Angelina. Oh, too late! (*Rushes to the window and hides behind curtain with EUPHRASIA.*)

St. George. Open the door or I'll burst it in!

Snapshot (violently). Be quiet, you idiot, or we are all lost!

Simpkins (aside). I said I should make a sensation!

(*Exit R. Enter SPOOLBY, R.*)

Snapshot (aside). He's read the letter by this time!

Spoolby. Here are the gloves, my boy! (*gives him EUPHRASIA'S gloves.*)

Snapshot. The gloves!

Spoolby. Yes, I found I had left my own gloves and taken these.

Snapshot. Do you mean to say you came back for that?

Spoolby. Yes, I've brought 'em back. I say, where is she? Is she here still? (*Looks at the curtain and bursts into laughter.*) Oh, this is lovely! There are two pairs now!

Snapshot (darkly). Here are your gloves! Go!

Spoolby. Two pairs! Oh, you dog! Are you engaged to both?

Snapshot. Can't you understand? It's the chaperon!

Spoolby. The *what*?

Snapshot. The chaperon, of course! Do you suppose she comes here without a chaperon? (*Aside*) What invention!

Spoolby. I'm going—I'm going. Oh, Timothy, I haven't laughed so much since I've been married.

Enter SIMPKINS R.

Snapshot. What is it?

Simpkins. I'm perfectly overwhelmed—they're coming in crowds, sir!

Snapshot. Who?

Simpkins. I don't know. Two gentlemen and another veiled lady.

Spoolby. Timothy, my boy, you're overdoing it; you're overdoing it.

Snapshot. Didn't they give any names?

Simpkins. Well, sir, one of the gents said it was Retribution—I expect it's creditors.

Snapshot. Creditors.

Simpkins. Bloater's been paid, you see. Bloater's spread it, and so all the rest of 'em think you've got money.

Snapshot. I can't get out of that door because it's locked—I can't get out of the window—I can't get up the chimney—I'll face 'em, Damme if I don't! Show 'em up!

Exit SIMPKINS R.

Spoolby. I shouldn't wonder if they showed you up, Timothy.

St. George (within L). Let me out! let me out!

Snapshot (roaring). Can't. I've lost the key!

Spoolby (picking it up). Key? What key—here's a key—Who's in there?

Snapshot (furious). If you interfere I'll—I'll cut *you* off with a shilling!

St. George (within). Let me out I say!

Spoolby. Timothy, you're overdoing it! I am not naturally of a suspicious temperament, but what with the pair of gloves, the two pairs of boots, and the voice, I am rapidly arriving at the conclusion that there's a mystery here. Stand aside. Come out, mystery!

Unlocks door L. Enter ST. GEORGE.

St. George (*crossing to Snapshot*). I have been quiet, sir, but you have an account to settle with me!

Snapshot. You're right. You paid Bloater. By Jingo, you shall pay me, some day!

St. George. Sir!

Snapshot. Oh! go to Bath!

Simpkins (*announcing, R.*) Mr. Blore, Mr. Pottleby, and Miss Prudence.

St. George. Angels and Ministers of Grace, defend us!

Enter BLORE, POTTLEBY, AND PRUDENCE, R.

Blore. Where is the villain! (*seizes Snapshot by the throat!*)

Pottleby. Let me drink his blood! (*seizes Spoolby by the throat*).

Prudence. Master Vincent, come to your Prudence! (*seizes St. George*).

Blore. Where's my ward?

Pottleby. Where's my bride?

Prudence. Where's my bonnet and shawl?

Spoolby. Dash it, you're choking me—you've got the wrong man—Look behind the curtains!

BLORE, SPOOLBY, & PRUDENCE rush to the curtains and draw them aside. Tableau.

Blore

Pottleby.

Spoolby.

Snapshot.

} Angelina!

Snapshot. I daresay you'll excuse me. I've got to see a man.

Spoolby (*with dignity*). You see a man, sir! You see a man who requires an explanation. What is my wife doing in your window, Sir?

Snapshot. Looking out, I suppose!

Spoolby. I advise you to look out!

Angelina. I am lost!

Euphrasia. I am undone!

St. George. Ladies, rely on me! Mrs. Spoolby, I can clear this up in two words. Mrs. Spoolby came here as chaperon to Miss Angelina, who is engaged to Mr. Snapshot.

Simpkins. What invention!

Euphrasia. Are you engaged to her?

Snapshot. I don't know—I don't know anything—go away, all of you—let me go to bed.

Blore. He's not engaged to her! He refused her!

Angelina (sadly). Oh, Timothy!

Euphrasia (joyfully). Oh, Timothy!

Blore. She's engaged to Pottleby—

Pottleby (bursting out). She's nothing of the sort!

Blore. Pottleby!

Pottleby. She's nothing of the sort. I won't have her. Blow me tight if I do!

Blore. Blow you *what*, sir?

Pottleby. It's a figure of speech!

Blore. Somebody's got to have her!

St. George (calmly). I am the man, sir! Angelina, I have long loved you in secret—but I was too chivalrous to shew it. Think what I have gone through for your sake!

Angelina. My hero! You went through the window for my sake! I knew I loved somebody, I thought I loved Timothy. Now I see I loved you all the time.

St. George. I said you should marry the man you loved and so you shall. Be mine, sweet maid!

Angelina. I will.

Prudence. What about my bonnet and shawl?

Angelina (gushingly). Oh, do not rob me of those, his earliest gifts.

Prudence. Don't! you'll make me cry!

Spoolby (holding out his arms). Euphrasia!

Euphrasia. Jonathan!—no! good old Uncle Spoolby dotes on a pretty face!

Spoolby. Yours, my love—then; I knew it was you all the time.

Simpkins. What invention!

Euphrasia. Then I am disarmed! (*embrace*)

Snapshot. I don't seem to be on in this scene!

Spoolby. Timothy you've saved me. She can never mention the ponies again. Consider your debts paid!

Snapshot. Good old Uncle Spoolby, I will!

Euphrasia. Timothy, you have saved me. Here are ten pounds: get engaged.

Snapshot. Excellent Euphrasia! I will!

Pottleby. Angelina is engaged—Prudence has given away her clothes—Mr. Snapshot's debts are paid—and I have shown spirit—the farce is over.

Blore. Farce? What farce?

Pottleby. Oh—it's a figure of speech.

St. George. Angelina, come. We will leave this house and go and live according to the Higher Teaching. We will show that marriage is no failure—that chivalry is not dead! You shall be as happy as the day is long, with love on one side of you—

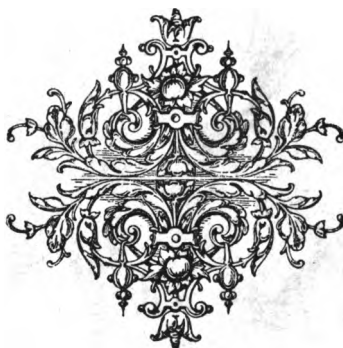
Prudence. And Prudence on the other—

Angelina. Between ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON!

POTTLEBY, BLORE, SIMPKINS, EUPHRASIA, SPOOLBY,
PRUDENCE, ANGELINA, ST. GEORGE.

CURTAIN.





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